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Film

# Super powers equal super box-office

Man of Steel keeps the summer popcorn season going

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Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Is it a seven-figure weekend tally? Keep calm, cinema operators: everything below the top spot may be floundering (*Epic* in third place with €139,605, *After Earth* in fourth with €97,797) but Superman is here to save the box office from this benighted heatwave.

Just as the tentpole season looked to be winding down awfully prematurely (even assuming our chums at Disney know something we don't, nobody expects *The Lone Ranger* to break records, right?), along comes *Man of Steel* with a weekend take of €965, 768, or €1.29 million if you lump in previews.

That sum makes *Man of Steel* this years' biggest opening weekend in the ROI and puts the DC hero just ahead of Marvel titan *Iron Man 3*'s €856,134.

Across the Atlantic, Superman's cape flew equally high. *MOS* earned \$128.6 million Stateside over the weekend and raked in an additional \$12 million from Thursday previews. That figure beats out *Toy Story 3* to make *Man of Steel* the biggest June opening of all time.

It's great news for the folks at Warner Bros, although the tally for non-Anglophone turf may well give executives pause for thought. To date only a paltry 32.4 per cent (or \$73.3 million) of *Steel's* take has originated in the Rest of World. The number isn't exactly megabucks, but it is comparable to the low initial ROW turnout for *The Dark Knight*. That film ultimately edged toward 46.8 per cent in non-US territories and hovered up more than a billion dollars worldwide.

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The same executives would also do well to remember that *Superman Returns* was sitting on a comparable sum after its opening weekend back in 2006.

There's an interesting comparison to be made between *Man of Steel* and *Hangover 3*, which is, like much of the summer's fare, a Warner Bros release. The stag- themed threequel has underperformed in the US to the tune of \$108.7 million but scored significantly better everywhere else. To date, 65 per cent of *Hangover 3*'s take is non-domestic; a whopping €1,932,515 of that has come from the ROI, where the film continues to ride high in the No 2 spot.

*Hangover 3* is just one of many comedies that have failed to connect in the US this summer. Despite a very visible and wildly expensive marketing campaign, the starry apocalyptic ensemble comedy *This Is the End* (released here next week) took only \$20.7 million from more than 3,000 screens at the weekend – half of what the similarly staffed *Pineapple Express* mustered in its opening three days.

Maybe that's because *This Is the End's* target audience are going to see the delightfully daft magician caper *Now You See Me* instead. Good word of

mouth has kept that movie, America's surprise summer hit, sitting pretty at No 3 after three weeks. The film can boast an \$111 million haul worldwide, swiped right from under the noses of bigger studio bets. The film opens here July 5th if sunshine hasn't closed the country down before then.

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Dave Franco   Fisher Isla   Henry Cavill   Jesse Eisenberg   Mark Ruffalo   Melanie Laurent   Michael Caine  
Morgan Freeman   Woody Harrelson   Disney   Warner Bros

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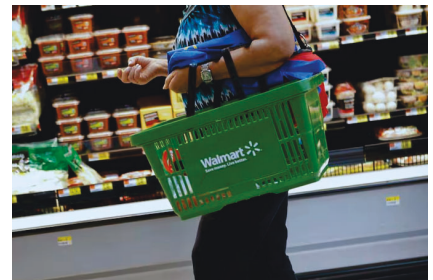
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